

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 05 COLOMBO 002304

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SA/INS, INL

JUSTICE FOR OIA, AFMLS, AND NDDS

TREASURY FOR FINCEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: N/A

TAGS: [SNAR](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [CE](#) [MV](#)

SUBJECT: 2002 International Narcotics Control Strategy

Report for Sri Lanka and the Maldives

Refs: (A) State 240035

- (B) State 240015

11. Please find attached Mission's 2002 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INSCR). Responses to Ref B queries re Sri Lanka are covered in Paragraph two and the Maldives in paragraph three. Information on money laundering requested in Ref A will be provided by Septel.

=====
SRI LANKA
=====

12. Mission's draft of the 2002 INSCR for Sri Lanka follows. Responses are keyed to questions in Ref B.

BEGIN TEXT:

I. Summary:

Sri Lanka has a comparatively modest drug problem. The government maintains a solid counternarcotics record, including a strong nation-wide demand reduction program. The U.S. government has a close relationship with the Sri Lankan government on counternarcotics issues. Supported by the U.S. Embassy, efforts at public education on drug abuse continued during the year. The country remained an effective regional player in counternarcotics cooperation. An ongoing ceasefire with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) has enabled the government to commit more officials to counternarcotics efforts, thus strengthening Sri Lanka's counternarcotics activities. The government continued to make available to other nations in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) a U.S. government-funded database on narcotics arrests and related information. Sri Lanka has signed the UN Drug Convention, although Parliament still had not considered the enabling legislation for the convention as of the end of 2002.

II. Status of Country:

Sri Lanka is not a major producer of narcotics or precursor chemicals. Some evidence exists that Sri Lanka may be a transit point for a limited amount of narcotics. With respect to its domestic situation, Sri Lanka has a modest drug problem with continued consumption of heroin and cannabis.

III. Country Action Against Drugs in 2002:

-- Policy Initiatives: In 2002, the Sri Lankan government continued to maintain a good track record on counternarcotics issues. One primary change affecting operations during 2002 was the December 2001 transfer of jurisdiction of the police -- who are responsible for counternarcotics and demand reduction activities -- from the Ministry of Defense to the Ministry of Interior. The change in leadership coincided with a cessation of hostilities with the LTTE and was implemented by the new government elected on December 5, 2001. During the 19-year conflict with the LTTE, the police were often called on to assist in prosecuting the war effort against the LTTE. This was clearly evident in the decrease in personnel in police bureaus, including the Police Narcotics Bureau (PNB). The past year has seen the PNB refocus on the Sri Lankan counternarcotics masterplan drafted with the assistance of the UN Drug Control Program (UNDCP) and initially implemented in 1994. The PNB increased its staff from approximately 150 officers to just over 200. With the cessation of hostilities between the government and the LTTE, PNB officers were able to focus on counternarcotics investigations instead of being constantly pulled aside for additional duties.

At the end of the year, the government had not yet submitted to Parliament the comprehensive

counternarcotics legislative package drafted by the National Dangerous Drugs Control Board (NDDCB), the government agency responsible for coordinating national drug policies. The proposed legislation was being reviewed by the Attorney General's office at year's end. During 2002, the NDDCB, in anticipation of the eventual implementation of its legislative package, was developing monitoring mechanisms for current and upcoming counternarcotics legislation.

-- Accomplishments: In January 2001, the Sri Lankan government signed an extradition treaty with the United States. Sri Lanka continued to work with SAARC on regional narcotics issues.

-- Law Enforcement Efforts: The PNB, the Customs Service, and the Department of Excise share responsibility for discouraging cannabis production. At mid-year, the PNB was forecasting a reduction in the annual seizure rate of narcotics. At year's end, however, a series of seizures, including approximately 20kg of heroin in November, dramatically increased the total amount of narcotics seized.

((NOTE: At this time, the annual statistics on seizures and arrests are not yet available from the Sri Lankan government. Per instructions in Ref B, Mission will forward the statistics, as they become available.))

-- Corruption: Although there were rumors (nothing confirmed) of bribery of low-level government officials by narcotics dealers in 2002, there was no evidence that public officials engaged in narcotics trafficking. In one case a former police officer was arrested for narcotics trafficking and was awaiting trial at year's end. In 1994, the government established a permanent commission to investigate charges of bribery and corruption against public officials. No narcotics-related corruption cases were reportedly reviewed by this body during 2002.

-- Agreements and Treaties: Sri Lanka has signed the 1988 UN Drug Convention, and the 1990 SAARC convention on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. Enabling legislation for both conventions, initially drafted by the NDDCB in 1997, still had not reached Parliament at year's end. The Attorney General's office was reviewing the legislation. In January 2001, the Sri Lankan government enacted a new extradition treaty with the United States. Sri Lanka has also signed the following agreements: World Customs Organization Convention; the International Convention on Investigation and Repression of Customs Offences (the Nairobi Convention); the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, along with the 1972 Protocol Amending the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs; and the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substance (signed in 1993).

-- Cultivation and Production: With respect to illicit narcotic substances, Sri Lanka is only known to produce cannabis, and Sri Lanka's production has little, if any, effect on the United States. Most cannabis cultivation occurs in heavy jungle in the southeastern part of the island, adjacent to previous areas of conflict. The police have an active program to find and destroy cannabis crops.

((NOTE: At this time, the annual statistics on eradication efforts are not yet available from the Sri Lankan government. Per instructions in Ref B, Mission will forward the statistics, as they become available.))

-- Drug Flow/Transit: Some heroin reportedly transits Sri Lanka. Unlike 2001, no major seizures occurred at Colombo's international airport. Customs officials and the PNB suspect that narcotics are brought into Sri Lanka by ship from India. During 2002, India reported large-scale seizures of heroin headed for Sri Lanka in Chennai. The PNB regularly stressed their country's vulnerability to transshipment of heroin from India due to Sri Lanka's long coastline. Sri Lanka has no coast guard and the primary operations of Sri Lanka's naval vessels were in efforts to prevent the inflow of weapons to the LTTE. This lack of seagoing capability hinders interdiction efforts.

-- Domestic Programs: The government has an excellent record on demand reduction. The NDDCB continued its aggressive national public education campaign. In addition, the PNB in conjunction with NGOs, and after U.S. government-funded training through the Colombo Plan, initiated an anti-narcotics education campaign in late 2002 in schools nation-wide. The NDDCB, through international and local funding, provides training on prevention techniques and has established four free treatment and rehabilitation centers in Sri Lanka. The

courses offered by NDDCB are directed at judicial officers, police officers, students, teachers, and parents. The Colombo Plan also continued extensive rehabilitation and prevention training programs. Until 2002, the Colombo Plan worked primarily with NGOs in Sri Lanka. Due to the ongoing ceasefire, the PNB has been able to allocate more time to training for its personnel and has worked with the Colombo Plan to expand the police officers' focus from only interdiction to include prevention techniques.

IV. U.S. Policy Initiatives and Programs:

-- U.S. Policy Initiatives: The U.S. government has a close relationship with the Sri Lankan government on counternarcotics issues. In addition to providing material and financial support, the U.S. Embassy in Sri Lanka has participated actively in community awareness seminars. The U.S. government hopes to advance self-sufficiency and co-operation among law enforcement and other government officials working on narcotics issues in Sri Lanka and the region. In 2002, several PNB officers participated in an Anti-Terrorist Assistance training program in the United States and Sri Lanka. The U.S. government is the principle contributor to the Colombo Plan's Drug Advisory Program (DAP), providing over USD 300,000 to the program in 2002. The funding was used to conduct regional and country-specific training seminars with government and NGO representatives on education, awareness, rehabilitation, and prevention techniques. The DAP also contributed directly to awareness campaigns in Colombo.

-- Bilateral Cooperation: In previous years, the U.S. government assisted several Sri Lankan organizations in their counternarcotics efforts. In 1998, the U.S. government provided close to USD 7,000 for equipment purchases to the NDDCB, the Federation of Non-Governmental Organizations Against Drug Abuse (FONGOADA), and the Sri Lanka Anti-Narcotics Association. In August 2000, more than 30 participants from narcotics enforcement agencies in four countries attended an anti-narcotics investigative techniques course in Colombo funded by the U.S. government and conducted by the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA). In 2002, the U.S. continued to provide training to the Sri Lankan government. In December, for example, the DEA conducted a training program on airport interdiction techniques for 26 participants from Sri Lanka and four participants from the Maldives.

-- Road Ahead: The U.S. government will continue to work with Sri Lankan counternarcotics organizations whenever possible, particularly by speaking at or otherwise participating in seminars addressing the drug problem. The overall level of U.S. counternarcotics assistance to Sri Lanka is expected to incrementally increase in 2003. The U.S. expects to continue its support of the Colombo Plan, and already has agreements to conduct additional training with the PNB and other government officials involved in counternarcotics efforts.

IV. Statistical Tables:

((NOTE: At this time, the annual statistics on eradication efforts are not yet available from the Sri Lankan government. Per instructions in Ref B, Mission will forward the statistics, as they become available.))

END TEXT.

=====

MALDIVES

=====

13. Mission's draft of the 2002 INSCR for the Maldives follows.

BEGIN TEXT:

The Maldives is not a major producer of narcotics or precursor chemicals. No concrete evidence exists that the Maldives is a transit point for narcotics. Some Maldivian officials believe their country may become a transshipment point, however.

Consisting of approximately 1,100 islands set in the Indian Ocean, and with a population of approximately 270,000, the Republic of the Maldives has a comparatively small drug problem that appears to be growing. The government is aware of the problem and is fully cooperative with the U.S. on counternarcotic issues. The fact that children under 16 constitute about 50 percent of the population makes police and UNDP officials wary of the high growth potential for drug use in the country. Nonetheless, the police believe they

can control the sale of drugs on the streets of the capital and most populated city, Male. Police officials believe that some of the country's approximately 25,000 foreign workers, mainly Indians and Sri Lankans who work in the country's resorts, conduct most of the trafficking, which is believed to be limited.

Although there is no evidence yet to indicate that the Maldives is a transshipment point at this time, international observers and some government officials fear that the Maldives has the potential to become a transshipment point for smugglers. Most drugs are believed to come into the country by sea, but the Customs Service and police find it impossible to search all ships adequately. In late 2002, the government participated in training with Sri Lanka on using drug sniffing dogs to help search vessels.

The U.S. has assisted the Maldives in counternarcotics activities, including via direct training or through the Colombo Plan. With U.S. government funding, the Maldivian government began to computerize its immigration record-keeping system in 1993 in an attempt, among other purposes, to track the movements of suspected drug traffickers. Starting in 1996 the U.S. has contributed USD 33,000 to implement and then expand this computer system.

In November 1997, the Maldivian government established a Narcotics Control Board (NCB) under the Executive Office of the President. The Board's Commissioner, a military officer, has concurrent duties in the Maldivian National Security Service. The NCB principally oversees rehabilitation of addicts, and co-ordinates the efforts of NGOs and other individuals engaged in counternarcotics activities. He also co-ordinates drug interdiction activities.

In 1997, the government established the country's first drug rehabilitation center with space for several dozen clients. With the expansion of the rehabilitation program, and a move to the land previously occupied by the national prison, the center now houses up to 300 clients at any one time. The center cannot keep pace with the number of people ordered to undergo rehabilitation, however. At times there are as many people under house arrest and awaiting a position in the camp, as there are individuals undergoing treatment. In addition to the camp, the NCB has established a continuing prevention program designed to prevent relapse. The government also launched an ongoing drug awareness campaign in 1998. In conjunction with the national effort, the government sent teams to 11 of the 19 atolls to conduct awareness campaigns and to assist in drug detection.

The Republic of the Maldives has no extradition treaty with the United States. In 1994, however, the Maldives cooperated with the U.S. in rendering a Nigerian national to the United States to face narcotics trafficking charges. The Maldivian government has signed the 1988 UN Convention. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Convention on Narcotic Drugs came into force in the Maldives in 1993.

END TEXT.

WILLS